

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes**

**September 17, 2015**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, #112, Town Hall with the following members present: D. Bruce, J. Burke, J. Denneen, J. McDermott, R. Mariani, M. Trudell, J. Guyette, T. Bowen, 7:20 – S. Lawson. Members absent were: D. Crowley, A. Healy, P. Hinton, J. Lowre, P. Stasiukevicius and J. Vaillancourt. Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson, Finance Director M. Thompson and Town Accountant J. Cuneo, Fire Chief T. Bailey

7:10 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce.

### **October 19, 2015 Fall Annual Town Meeting**

**Article 13** – Liquor Licenses, Dr. Chris Walker, Chairman of EDC. Liz Dennehy, Economic Development Director

Five additional on premises alcoholic beverage licenses being requested (three for the CBD and two for the Rte. 1 Highway Business Corridor). These additional liquor licenses will help increase taxes (meal taxes). Projected revenue received from these five licenses would be about \$85,000/year.

L. Dennehy spoke to speaking to the current liquor license holders and they are in favor and support the request for additional liquor licenses. These licenses will be clearly marked Economic Development and the license cannot be sold, it returns to the Town. A restaurant license cannot become a package store license. They are going to invite the Common Victualler's license holders to their next meeting to answer any questions they might have. They feel it would be good practice to reach out to businesses for their comments. They have not gone out to the public at large at this time. These licenses are all alcoholic and not wine and malt. There is the potential of a hotel being built on Route 1 and they would be looking for a liquor license. MAPC did a market analysis for the Economic Development last Spring and one of the recommendations was to increase the Town's capacity of liquor license. They have discussed with the Police Department and there doesn't appear to be an increase in crime with liquor licenses. Responsibility is on the restaurants. These licenses will be phased in over a period of time, and would be up to the Selectmen to grant them. Legislation will indicate that they are non-transferable and are an Economic Development License.

7:20 – Susan Lawson.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Articles 30 and 31** - Town Administrator explained that these articles are related to solar energy. Last year Town added a solar zone to the Zoning Bylaws.

**Article 30 Net Metering** - Authorizes the Selectmen to enter a “Net Metering Agreement” with Bird Machine Solar Farm. This is the first time that the Town has done a Net Metering Agreement. This would allow the company to generate their own electricity in order to offset their electricity usage. Town would be a buyer of the credits and Bird Machine is the seller who is financing, developing, owning, operating and maintaining the solar facilities. These will be located on private property at the Bird Machine Site in South Walpole. Town anticipates receiving \$190,000 worth of savings in the first year of the agreement. Bird Machine will pay the Town \$18,000 per month starting on April 1, 2016 if facility is not up and running. They will also pay the Town \$24,000 for legal and consulting fees for this agreement.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 30, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Article 31 – Pilot Agreements** – Authorizes the Town to enter into two PILOT Agreements for solar photovoltaic facilities to be installed on privately owned parcels of land (Bird Machine Site located in South Walpole and the Bird Landfill located just off of Renmar Ave.) These are in lieu of taxes. Anticipated that the Town will receive approximately \$2,000,000 in revenue over 20 years. Town previously voted to approve these two solar zones in the 2014 FATM. They can come back for an abatement of taxes under the Pilot Agreement. Town has to figure out the handling of the water account. Town Administrator has asked Town Counsel if the whole agreement has to go to Town Meeting, and it was opined that Town Meeting has to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into the agreement.

When the agreements expire, they could go back to being a landfill or the Town could renegotiate. Town Administrator spoke to looking at the Town’s landfill for a solar photovoltaic facility but this would open the Town to increased costs to monitor the site despite the newer above ground non-invasive technology.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 31, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Town Administrator**

**Article 29** – Town Counsel is presently reviewing this private petition and Town Administrator has asked for a legal opinion on the legality of this article.

**Articles 6 and 7 – Funding of OPEB and Stabilization Fund.** Committee had previously discussed having First Southwest, the Town’s Financial Advisor to meet with the FinCom in the Fall or during the Winter. If the Committee met with First Southwest, they would not need to meet with the “Bond Rating Agency”. Town Administrator suggested setting up a time to meet with First Southwest prior to the budget process if the Committee believes that a session with them would be productive. The Committee had questions on putting additional money into OPEB and whether doing this would help the Town’s bond rating. Town Administrator spoke to Walpole doing more than other towns in putting money in OPEB. He is recommending \$50,000 for OPEB, these funds don’t help the bond rating. He is recommending \$100,000 for Stabilization as this does help the bond rating.

Project Management Team – Final bids received on September 1, 2015. He is going to request \$100,000 be put into the Debt Budget and seek authorization to borrow to cover the unexpected costs moving forward for some of the new municipal facilities under Article 2. Town Administrator will set up an account in the Spring for the fire station

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on Article 6, in the amount of \$100,000 from Free Cash, Motion Passed (8-1-0) (K. Guyette) Opposed (9 voting)

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on Article 7 in the amount of \$50,000 from Free Cash, Motion Passed (8-1-0) (K. Guyette) opposed (9 voting)

**Article 12 – Charter Change/Finance Department**

Committee had questions on the requested change on the powers and duties of the Treasurer and Tax Collector. Town Administrator explained that this change had been discussed in prior years. When the Town was looking for a Finance Director, Town was limited due to the requirements laid out in the Town’s Charter. Charter outlines the responsibilities of the Finance Director and the Director oversees the Town Accountant and Assistant Treasurer/ Collector and four other employees in the Treasurer/Collector’s Office. Accountant oversees the Assistant Town Accountant and one part time clerk. These appointments are made by the Town Administrator. He doesn’t anticipated any changes while the present individuals are serving in their capacity. Finance Director presently can only be Finance Director and Collector but not Accountant. There is no organizational chart available for this department.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 12, Motion Passed (8-0-1) (D. Bruce abstained) (9 voting)

**Article 8 – Grant Monies**

Town Administrator is hoping to hear on grant monies for the Turner’s Pond Dam prior to Town Meeting.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Recommendation at Town Meeting, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Minutes – Sept. 10, 2015**

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the September 10, 2015 minutes, Motion Passed (6-0-3) (R. Mariani, J. Burke and T. Bowen abstained) (9 voting)

**Schedule** - Finance Committee will attend the Planning Board Public Hearings on the zoning articles on Thursday, October 1. Chairman requested that a quorum of the Finance Committee attend this meeting.

**Adjourn:**

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn at 8:55 p.m, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) (Unanimous)

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril  
Clerk

